

## Social Media and Media Code of Conduct for FactCheck Georgia Staff

Social media is a central instrument for receiving and disseminating information. It is through social networks that communication with the wider public and this audience takes place. Therefore, activities in social networks affect not only a specific individual involved in these activities but also the organisation where he/she is employed. At the same time, traditional media still remains as a principal source of information in Georgia.

This document, alongside with the organisation's regulations, is equally applicable to each employee of FactCheck, irrespective of his/her position in the organisation. It encompasses a body of rules which should be respected by any individual FactCheck employee as well as constituting an integral part of FactCheck's fundamental principles of political impartiality and neutrality which serve as a guideline for FactCheck's editorial office and its activities.

These rules are approved by the Director of Georgia's Reforms Associates.

Penalties for breaching these rules are stipulated in line with the organisation's regulations.

### **Rule 1**

FactCheck employees may publish any type of content of their interest in their own social networks if the nature of that content does not contradict the organisation's rules and norms of its Regulations as well as general principles of ethics.

### **Rule 2**

FactCheck employees may hold communications on any topic of their interest with any other user and give answers or ask questions relevant to matters of their interest, although the forms of those communications should not contradict the principles defined by the organisation's Regulations and generally acknowledged ethical norms.

### **Rule 3**

FactCheck employees are prohibited from using profanity, hate speech and foul language during their activity in social networks or giving comments to the media. These types of actions are also prohibited in response to any analogous behaviour from others (third party/parties).

### **Rule 4**

FactCheck employees, as members of civil society, are entitled to have their individual views vis-à-vis various political issues. However, it is strictly unacceptable to express their political positions in the name of FactCheck. In addition, FactCheck employees should not publicly support a specific politician or political party.

### **Rule 5**

FactCheck employees should not post unverified information or/and information containing fake news. FactCheck employees may respond to such publications only with the aim to obtain additional information and strictly within the scope of their professional activity.

**Rule 6**

Erroneously made publications in social media should be corrected in such a manner to ensure that the reader/viewer/listener easily understands that the initial version of the publication contained a mistake and the mistake has been corrected.

**Rule 7**

It is strictly prohibited for FactCheck's employees to openly endorse any political group or politician for elections on behalf of the operation.